

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

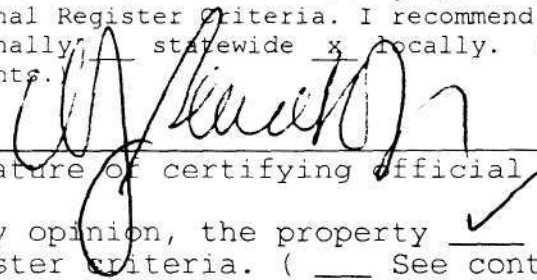
historic name Stewart's Department Store  
other names/site number Posner Building; B-2290

**2. Location**

street 226-232 West Lexington Street  
not for publication n/a city or town Baltimore vicinity n/a  
state Maryland code MD county independent city code 510 zip code 21201

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination        request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets        does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant        nationally        statewide x locally. (        See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature of certifying official

7-29-99  
Date

In my opinion, the property        meets        does not meet the National Register criteria. (        See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

Page 2

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ National Register  
\_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper      Date  
                                 of Action

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#### 5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  1  </u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in National Register   0    
Name of related multiple property listing   n/a

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

Page 3

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## 6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: department store

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: VACANT/NOT IN USE Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Renaissance Revival

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

roof Asphalt

walls Brick; Terracotta

other n/a

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

Page 4

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**J. Statement of Significance**

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
COMMERCE

Period of Significance 1899-1945

Significant Dates 1899; ca. 1910

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder Charles E. Cassell, architect

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)



USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
 Stewart's Department Store  
 Baltimore city, MD

Page 5

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

USGS quadrangle Baltimore East, MD

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	360330	4350210	C	18	_____
B	18	_____	_____	D	18	_____
_____ See continuation sheet.						

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property is described among the records of the City of Baltimore, Department of Public Works, Property Location Division as Ward 4, Section 100, Block 598, Lot 009.

Boundary Justification: The nominated property comprises the single city lot upon which the resource stands and with which it is historically associated.

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

Page 6

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**1. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Betty Bird and Heather Ewing  
organization Betty Bird & Associates date November 30, 1998  
street & number 2607 24<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 3 telephone (202) 588-9033  
city or town Washington state DC zip code 20008

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historical districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section 7 Page 7B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD  
=====DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Stewart's Department Store (originally called the Posner Building), was designed in 1899 by architect Charles E. Cassell. It is a six-story brick and steel-frame building detailed in a highly ornate Italian Renaissance Revival style. Its exuberant ornamental detail includes fluted Ionic and Corinthian columns, lion heads, caryatids, wreaths, garlands, cartouches, and an elaborate bracketed cornice. The building has two detailed facades that face onto Howard Street (west) and Lexington Street (south); the Clay Street facade (north) is finished in a utilitarian manner, and the east facade joins with adjacent buildings. Roughly square in plan, Stewart's has three components: a five-story late 19th-century brick building at the corner of Clay and Howard Streets (the northwest corner of Stewart's), the 1899 main block, and a ca. 1910 addition to the east, detailed to match the 1899 building. The interior of the building consists of open plan space that retains few decorative features dating to the building's period of significance. Stewart's Department Store was historically one of four major department store buildings that anchored the intersection of Howard and Lexington Streets. Today the street level of the Stewart's building is occupied by both elevations by small individual retail stores, a development undertaken after the department store closed. The upper floors of the building are vacant.

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The Stewart's Department Store building features two principal facades, the west fronting on Howard Street and the south on Lexington Street. The building is 11 bays on Howard by nine bays on Lexington. The Howard Street facade extends north an additional three bays to include a late 19th-century brick outhold building at the northwest corner of the lot. The bays of the main building's two principal facades are articulated by monumental brick piers capped by Corinthian capitals, framed on the bottom by ground story entrances and storefronts and on top by a short sixth story and a projecting cornice. Architect Cassell broke up the great length of the facades by means of the architectural detailing, forcing a Beaux Arts-inspired symmetrical design on what otherwise was a modular conception. The Howard Street facade is arranged into a large central tripartite bay flanked on either side by three bays; a decorative double-window bay punctuates the outer ends of the facades,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**Section   7   Page   8  B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD  
=====

terminating with two more bays. At the north end of Howard Street facade, the design evidently anticipated the acquisition and demolition of the Clay Street outhold building, which would have provided the two bays required to complete the symmetrical composition of the west facade. This outhold building, however, was never demolished, and the 1899 block concludes at the north end with the double-window decorative bay. Ornamental pediments project from the flat roof to announce these articulated bays, a triangular pediment for the central tripartite grouping and segmented ones for the end pavilion bays. The central bay, which once contained the principal entrance to the building, is defined by two tiers of double-height Corinthian columns in antis. The decorative end pavilions are heavily ornamented on the spandrels between the floor levels. The spandrels feature terra cotta panels with caryatids, putti, floral garlands, and lion heads. At the height of the second floor, the decorative banding of garlanded lion heads carries across the entire facade, providing a pronounced horizontal element to the composition. The windows of the second through the fifth stories are one-over-one wood sash.<sup>1</sup> The sixth story, separated from the rest of the composition by a secondary cornice, is designed as an ornamental frieze, with small four-light horizontal windows framed by terra cotta panels. A larger and more elaborate cornice extends around the roofline, which is flat except for the above mentioned pediments.

The Lexington Street facade, which mimics the Howard Street facade in its decorative details, features a central columned entrance pavilion with a triangular pediment but no decorative end pavilion bays. It was originally designed with three bays flanking the central entrance on either side. Following Stewart's acquisition of the building in 1904, and the subsequent purchase ca. 1910 of the adjacent lot to the east, two bays replicating the detail of the original facade were added at the southeast end of the Lexington Street elevation.

At the junction of these two principal facades, on the southwest corner of the building, the second floor windows have been bricked over, an action probably taken in the 1950s or 60s. The ground floor of these two principal facades has been much altered, in a manner typical of commercial buildings. In the

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<sup>1</sup>The present one-over-one windows may be replacement windows. The original description of the building (see Section 8) highlighted the extensive use of plate glass, and early postcards (see Bert Smith, *Greetings from Baltimore*, p. 27) show single light windows.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 9

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

1930s, new entrances were inserted, featuring green marble pedimented surrounds, still extant. The original storefront windows and entrances on the ground floor have given way to a series of individual stalls and shops, part of a development in the early 1980s that transformed the ground floor into a mall. The Ionic columns that framed the alternating bay window fronts are still visible above the current shop installations.

At the north end of the building, running along Clay Street, is a five-story, ell-shaped, brick commercial building of the late-19th century, originally an outhold building not owned by Posner, but now part of the consolidated lot. The front of this building, tripartite in composition, forms the north end of the principal facade on Howard Street. The fenestration of the Howard Street bays of this outhold building features a central segmented-arch double window flanked on either side by a narrow one-over-one wood-sash window. At the fifth story level, these side windows are round-headed. Molded bricks form an ornamental cornice. With the exception of a one-bay return, the Clay Street facade of the 19th-century outhold building is detailed in a utilitarian manner. Additional windows have been punched into the Clay Street facade and the third floor windows have been lengthened.

At the northeast corner of the building lot, fronting on Clay Street, is a nine-story wing nine bays across, also finished in a utilitarian manner. Part of the original 1899 store, it has been called the Clay Street wing. The ell-shape of the brick Eastlake-influenced outhold building dictated an unusual configuration for the 1899 building footprint -- with a narrow projection extending to the east of the outhold building north to Clay Street. The Clay Street wing was originally built to a height of six stories when first constructed as part of the original 1899 building campaign. (The original cornice line is still visible at the sixth floor level on the exterior). The acquisition of the adjacent eastern lot in the first decade of the twentieth century enabled Louis Stewart to expand this wing eastward as well as vertically, gaining two bays in width and three stories in height. Window openings with simple brick sills frame six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash. Loading bays occupy the ground story. The uppermost or ninth story has no windows.

The interior of the building retains few decorative features and specialized spaces dating to the period of significance. The railing around the mezzanine level gallery, which overlooked the whole of the first

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   7   Page  10 

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

floor and contained a reception room for ladies when the building opened, still remains. On the upper floors, round columns and exposed beams express the building's structural system. The two principal stairs, with their elegant cast iron balusters, remain intact. One is located in the northwest corner of the 1899 building, and the other is situated at the southeast corner of the building. In the 1930s, the entire store was redecorated and refixed; the elevators and the open bank of escalators along the north wall of the building presumably date from this period. The open plan floors contain some built-in areas probably dating from the 1960s and 1970s. The ground story is no longer intact, having been altered in the early 1980s to accommodate a series of small shops with a central mall corridor running east to west through the store. The interior of the ell-shaped brick outhold building has also been extensively altered. The floors of the building do not line up with the department store building, necessitating a half-flight of stairs up or down upon entering the area from the main block. Fabric and finishes dating to the 1960s divide these floors.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 11

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

Significance Summary

Stewart's Department Store, designed in 1899 by noted Baltimore architect Charles E. Cassell, was constructed as a department store for Samuel Posner. Purchased by Louis Stewart in 1904, the ornate Italian renaissance revival building then became the flagship store for Stewart's Baltimore operations. Along with Hutzler's Palace Building (1888-89; listed in the National Register) and Hochschild Kohn (1897; demolished), the former Posner Building anchored Baltimore's premier downtown retail location at Lexington and Howard Streets. Stewart's Department Store meets National Register Criterion A because of its importance to the development of retailing in downtown Baltimore between 1899 and 1945. It also meets National Register Criterion C as an example of a type of major urban department store, and as a good example of the work of a major local 19<sup>th</sup> century architect.

**HISTORY**

The evolution of the Posner Building into Stewart's Department Store embodies the development of urban retailing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For much of the 19th century, dry goods merchants in urban areas typically operated from storehouses and shops in small two to three story commercial storefront buildings that combined both warehouse and retail functions. Retailing was often highly specialized, with one shop selling a single type of goods, like ladies' hats, or addressing a specific segment of the market, like a ship chandlers.

In the United States, various circumstances in the mid-19th century combined to accelerate both the growth and proliferation of commercial establishments, paving the way for the emergence of the department store as a distinct building type. The steam engine revolutionized the availability of goods, which could be produced more cheaply and moved more quickly and easily by rail or water. Increased population density in urban centers, the rise of streetcars, general prosperity, and the increased availability of capital all encouraged the growth and expansion of retail establishments. By the 1840s, competition among merchants was so fierce that profit was minimal.<sup>2</sup> More visionary shopkeepers realized that they could increase their business and their profit by offering a variety of goods in several "departments" under one roof, compensating for lower prices by higher selling volume. Department stores sold a variety of goods ranging from furniture to clothing to china and kitchen utensils. As

<sup>2</sup>Paul Hendrickson notes that the 1840 census recorded 57,565 retail stores with an average capitalization of \$4,350. Hendrickson, *The Grand Emporiums: The Illustrated History of America's Great Department Stores*, p. 32.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  12 

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

establishments grew, merchants expanded into larger structures or neighboring buildings, often cutting openings in party walls to connect space on each floor.

The Posner brothers, Elias (1848-1887) and Samuel (1851-1940), who established the concern that eventually became Stewart's Department Store, exemplified the class of successful entrepreneurs in late 19th century Baltimore. Exposed early on to business, the Posner brothers had come to Baltimore in search of a larger market after three years running a dry goods store they had established in New Brunswick, New Jersey.<sup>3</sup> Baltimore provided a particularly fertile environment for the development of downtown department stores. Served by the Inner Harbor and the B&O and Pennsylvania Railroads, Baltimore was an entrepôt for the creation and shipping of goods. Its population mushroomed at the rate of 25% per decade during the second half of the 19th century.<sup>4</sup> The city granted its horse car franchise in 1859; by the 1870s rival streetcar companies provided reliable mass transportation to and throughout downtown. The city's prosperous middle class, newly housed in speculative rowhouse neighborhoods spawned by annexation, offered an ideal market for consumer goods. Moreover, Baltimore's economic dominance within the state meant that the city's market reach extended well beyond its geographic limits.

In Baltimore, Lexington Market became a locus of the city's retail development. The largest market in the city, Lexington Market brought Maryland's farmers together with Baltimore's wholesale and retail consumers. By 1912 it housed over 1200 stalls, with an additional 600 wagons pulled along the curb, and drew 50,000 people per day.<sup>5</sup> As a virtual urban crossroads, Lexington Market brought together rural sellers with urban buyers, creating enormous traffic for nearby retail establishments. By the 1850s, when Moses Hutzler opened his first store

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<sup>3</sup>Their father Ephraim, who like his wife had come from Posen, Germany, was a prominent manufacturer of furs in New York City. In his youth Samuel Posner had worked as a clerk, and by the age of 18, his business acumen recognized, had been placed in charge of a store on Grand Street. Biographical information comes from obituaries in vertical files at the Enoch Pratt Free Library and the Jewish Historical Society, as well as George Howard, *The Monumental City*, pp. 1085-88, and *Industries of Maryland*, p. 187.

<sup>4</sup>Sherry Olson, *Baltimore: The Building of an American City*, p. 199.

<sup>5</sup>Lynn R. Meekins, *Collier's Magazine*, January 6, 1912 as reproduced in Marion E. Warren and Mame Warren, *Baltimore: When She Was What She Used to Be*, pp. 45-47. Meekins reveals Lexington Market's appeal to women, noting that "the wife of one of the leading men of the city" insisted on doing her own shopping rather than delegating it to servants. "'It is one of the great delights of my week. I enjoy it more than a tea or reception.'"

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  13 

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

just north of Howard and Lexington Streets, one block east of Lexington Market, the area had become a desirable retail location. Located immediately north of Baltimore's burgeoning wholesale district, Howard Street was among the widest streets in Baltimore's commercial area and could be easily reached from developing northern suburbs.<sup>6</sup>

The one-room store Elias and Samuel Posner established in 1876, upon their arrival in Baltimore, was by the end of the nineteenth century hailed as one of the largest and finest stores south of the Mason-Dixon line. The Posner Brothers opened their first store at 172 West Lexington Street, later adding 174 to the store address. In 1879, Posner's moved to 138 West Lexington Street closer to Lexington Market, expanding to three buildings within the decade (134-138 West Lexington). The idea of housing numerous different dry goods "departments" under one roof was still a relatively novel one in Baltimore, and the advantages of such an arrangement were readily apparent to the public. *Industries of Maryland* (1882) applauded the business, stating "any city would do well to imitate this example."<sup>7</sup> George Howard, writing of the brothers in his 1889 *The Monumental City*, proclaimed them pioneers of the new "Department Stores," and argued that Posner's "takes rank with the leading houses in the country, and is believed to be the finest and largest of its kind south of Philadelphia."<sup>8</sup>

Several aspects of Posner's business placed it at the forefront of this commercial development. One was their use of advertising. In 1889 George Howard argued that Posner's advertising had "confessedly proven one of the most potent agencies which have been employed by them in attaining the unprecedented popularity of the house, and the immense and increasing volume of its trade in the city and vicinity."<sup>9</sup> Another significant characteristic of their operation was its cash-only basis. Unlike many other retail stores of the time, Posner's established no credit systems with their customers.<sup>10</sup> Elias Posner, the senior partner, died in 1885 at the age of only 39, leaving a thriving business with 60 distinct departments and a workforce numbering some 250 people.<sup>11</sup>

Samuel Posner, who died in 1940, was praised for his careful attention to all details of the operation in subsequent years.<sup>12</sup> He carried on the

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<sup>6</sup>Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form for Market Center (B-1252), p. 8-3.

<sup>7</sup>*Industries of Maryland*, p. 187.

<sup>8</sup>Howard, *The Monumental City*, p. 1085.

<sup>9</sup>Howard, *The Monumental City*, p. 1087.

<sup>10</sup>Howard, *The Monumental City*, p. 1087.

<sup>11</sup>Obituary, vertical files, Jewish Historical Society.

<sup>12</sup>Baltimore: *The Gateway to the South*, pp. 105-06.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  14 

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

business through the turn of the century -- overseeing the construction in 1899 of a striking new purpose-built department store designed by noted Baltimore architect, Charles E. Cassell. The erection of such a monumental edifice represented a direct response to the pressures of a rapidly expanding retail industry.<sup>12</sup> One of Posner's chief competitors, Hutzler's, had constructed Baltimore's first (and now oldest extant) purpose-built department store. Designed by noted Baltimore architects Baldwin & Pennington, Hutzler's Palace Building, an eclectic Romanesque revival building situated at the center of the block at the northwest corner of Howard and Lexington Streets, spurred other retailers to erect their own department stores at this valuable intersection. In 1897, Hochschild Kohn opened their new department store (now demolished) adjacent to Hutzler's Palace. Not to be outdone, Samuel Posner constructed his new store in 1899, which was purchased by Louis Stewart in 1904. Along with Hutzler's Palace Building, Stewart's Department Store survives as one of two late 19th-century department store buildings that established the intersection of Lexington and Howard Streets as Baltimore's premier retail location. By 1925, the May Company completed their new department store on the southwest corner, diagonally across from Stewart's. Smaller, more specialized retailers and national chains like Kresge's and McCrory's flourished in the shadow of these larger retail giants.<sup>13</sup>

As a building type, purpose-built department stores constructed during the late 19th and early 20th century shared certain common characteristics. These buildings were characterized by their large size and grand scale, stylish architecture, open floor plans, expansive windows, and continuous storefronts along the street. The size and scale of the new department store building type signalled the depth and variety of merchandise the store offered. Along with the open floor plan, the building's size provided maximum flexibility for merchandise storage and display. The architectural panache of the department store building conveyed the store's image as a purveyor of fashionable and up-to-date goods. Style and exterior appearance also distinguished the department store from its competitors and from smaller, specialized retailers, providing an image of stability and permanence.

Architectural style, however, took a back seat to display and merchandising. Merchants insisted that sidewalk frontage be devoted entirely to storefronts, violating one of the most cherished architectural precepts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries -- that the base of a building be detailed to convey traditional notions of weight and support derived from masonry construction. Instead, massive department stores

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<sup>13</sup> Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form for Market Center (B-1252), pp. 8-3 - 8-4.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  15 

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

appeared to rest on a glazed watertable formed by the continuous storefronts.

The Stewart's building offers a good example of turn-of-the century department stores. Rising ~~stories~~ and occupying street frontage along Lexington and Howard Streets, the building dominates its corner location. Its lavish ornamentation recalls the Bon Marché in Paris, one of the most prominent early department stores. Cassell's design represented the most sophisticated and modern building technologies and amenities.<sup>14</sup> Each of the six floors was to function as one large open showroom, flooded with light from the extensive use of plate glass. A newspaper article about the opening of the building noted its "creamy white brick and terra cotta, with artistic ornamentation" and stated that the detailing combined with the building's "many large plate glass windows will give the building a light, airy, and graceful appearance."<sup>15</sup> While its ornate Italianate architectural vocabulary is one long associated with commercial architecture, architect Charles E. Cassell no doubt designed the Posner Building to contrast with the slightly heavier Romanesque architecture of Hutzler's Palace Store, its rival across the street. The Clay Street wing, projecting north at the east of the brick outhold building, in addition to housing the packing and shipping area in the basement and first story, was also equipped with a cafe in the mezzanine level of the first floor.

The feminine character of the contemporary language used to describe Posner's image -- "light, airy, and graceful" -- together with the newspaper article's description of gendered space within the building demonstrate how important providing public accommodations for women was to a department store's success:

Projecting into the main room on the level of the mezzanine floor will be an ornamental gallery. This gallery will overlook the whole first floor of the building. It will be fitted up as a reception room for ladies, where they may rest wait for their friends, write letters and chat. On the second story of the wing will be ladies' retiring rooms, connecting with toilet rooms.<sup>16</sup>

In cataloguing the spacious floor plans and the modern conveniences, the article emphasized above all that the building was to be "the most

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<sup>14</sup>"New Posner Building," *Baltimore Sun*, March 28, 1899, attachment to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form for Stewart's Department Store (B-2290), by Janet Davis of CHAP, 1986.

<sup>15</sup>"New Posner Building."

<sup>16</sup>"New Posner Building." Although this space has been much altered, the railing around the mezzanine still remains.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  16 

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

thoroughly fireproof structure in the city." Although the 1904 fire that devastated the eastern part of Baltimore's central business district was still several years away, the Clay Street fire of 1873 and smaller fires in the vicinity in the 1890s remained within recent memory.<sup>17</sup> Many contemporaneous stores resembled the old Posner store then being demolished at the site: a collection of one- or two-story buildings fitted for retail, not purpose-built and fireproof. The new Posner Building boasted wire glass in all the windows facing Clay Street and in the light wells in the main building, and almost no wood in the construction. The power house for generating the electricity for the lighting, the elevators, and the pneumatic cash system, as well as the steam heating, was located across Clay Street in a separate building -- with a tunnel under the street providing the connection to the department store -- obviating, as the newspaper article pointed out, "the necessity of having any fire whatsoever in the main building."

In 1904, five years after the construction of the new building, Posner sold the business to Louis Stewart (ca. 1855-1940).<sup>18</sup> Stewart was a former railroad magnate in New York who had branched out into department store retailing.<sup>19</sup> In 1900, Stewart had become president of James McCreery & Company, a department store chain in New York City. He also later served as president of Lord & Taylor.<sup>20</sup> Early in his dry goods business career Stewart had also connected with concerns in Louisville.<sup>21</sup> Louis Stewart

<sup>17</sup>Baltimore: *When She Was What She Used to Be*, pp. 40-43.

<sup>18</sup>Samuel Posner's obituary states that he sold the business to an H.B. Claflin. No other mention of this name has been found. Maryland Room Biographical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

<sup>19</sup>Paul Hendrickson could not document any relationship between Louis Stewart and the legendary mid-nineteenth century New York department store owner Alexander T. Stewart who had founded A.T. Stewart & Company in 1826. A.T. Stewart & Company by the Civil War years commanded the largest store that had yet been dedicated to the retail trade, the 1862 Cast Iron Palace, as well as the most impressive clientele; Mary Todd Lincoln's redecorating of the White House was carried out exclusively with Stewart goods. By the time Louis Stewart acquired Posner's in 1904, A.T. Stewart had been dead for over a quarter of a century. The continued attraction of his name, however, virtually synonymous with quality (Marshall Field was called the A.T. Stewart of the West), no doubt led Louis Stewart to change the name of the well-established Posner's to his own. Hendrickson, *Emporiums*, pp. 38-39, 144.

<sup>20</sup>Obituary, *Sun*, December 2, 1940.

<sup>21</sup>Isidor Blum, *Jews in Baltimore*, p. 266. In Louisville, he had made the acquaintance of two men on whom he relied to manage Stewart's: George V. Post, Vice President, and C.E. Steinkamp, Assistant Treasurer. The advertisement for Stewart's in Blum's 1910 book indicates that all three men had been connected with large dry goods houses in Louisville at one point.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  17 

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

reflected the emerging direction of growth for department store operations in the new 20th century. With expertise in running national-scale conglomerates, and with presumably a much larger access to capital, Stewart took the old Posner concern to a new level of business.

Within the first decade of ownership under Stewart, the building underwent a substantial renovation and expansion, as a result of the acquisition of the adjacent through lot to the east.<sup>22</sup> Posner's monogram, and the original name of the store playfully embedded in the terra cotta decorations of the tympana on the Howard and Lexington facades were probably replaced with Stewart & Company architectural ornament at this time. What was called the Clay Street wing, the small area that extended north to Clay Street at the east or rear of the brick outhold building, was also enlarged at this time -- both in footprint and in height. Originally six stories high, the Clay Street wing after the expansion numbered nine stories. It featured a lunchroom on the 7th floor, a kitchen on the 8th, and a cabinet/carpenter's shop on the 9th floor.

The incorporation of the 19th-century ell-shaped commercial building into the northwest corner of the store and the ca. 1910 eastern addition were typical department store expansion strategies. Because location is so important to retail success, stores expanded by acquiring adjacent property as their needs dictated and lots became available at a suitable price. Department store magnates would then construct new additions by reiterating the design module of the original store, expanding the street frontage and physical presence of the building. Louis Stewart adopted this approach for the ca. 1910 eastern addition to his store, which repeats the articulation and detailing of Cassell's original design.

In 1916, the Associated Dry Goods Corporation was formed, consolidating several department store interests across the nation. In addition to Stewart's of Baltimore, in 1937 the company's holdings comprised: Lord & Taylor's and J. McCreery & Co. of New York, Hahne & Co. of Newark, New Jersey, J.M. Adam & Co. and William Hengerer & Co. of Buffalo, Powers Dry Goods Co. of Minneapolis, and Stewart Dry Goods of Louisville.<sup>23</sup> The creation of this corporation presaged a sea change for the way department stores stocked and purchased their goods, representing a national consolidation and standardization of buying strategies across much of the country. The effects of this change were most strongly felt later in the century.

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<sup>22</sup>This information is gleaned from comparing the 1901 and the 1914 Sanborn maps.

<sup>23</sup>"A Message from the President of Stewart & Co. to His Associates," printed pamphlet, no date [1938]. Maryland Room Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 18

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

Stewart & Company flourished through the 1920s, and although hard hit like most stores during the Depression, saw sales volumes continue to rise through most of the 1930s. Between 1933 and 1937, sales rose from \$3,400,000 to \$4,800,000 -- an increase of 41% over four years. In a ca. 1937 pamphlet distributed to employees President Thomas P. Abbott provided a financial portrait of the business in lay terms. He detailed the efforts to improve the business during the ten years since 1928, much of which entailed dedicated attention to the public appearance of the store building. Over the course of the decade all of the floors had been "refixedured and redecorated." New public spaces were created. The basement level had been opened as a sales floor in February of 1931, and in the summer of that same year had been air conditioned -- by the first such unit in a large department store in Baltimore. In 1934, the air conditioning had been extended to include the first through the third floors as well as the beauty salon. In 1936, new elevators were installed, and, on the exterior, the entrances were reworked. The central entrance was closed and new recessed entrances were installed. In that same year, to facilitate their ever increasing shipping service, Stewart's built a new Delivery and Warehouse building on West Saratoga Street. In 1937, as Abbott summarized in his pamphlet, it cost about \$5,000 a day to operate Stewart's on a day it was open to the public. The employees had served over 580,000 people at the Soda Fountain and Restaurant during the year; they had mailed over 300,000 statements; and they had delivered some 1,060,000 packages.<sup>24</sup>

In the fiercely competitive world of department stores, keeping up with new fashions meant not only stocking the latest clothing trends but maintaining a modern and stylish facility. The extensive investment in the appearance of the building -- both internally ("refixedured and redecorated") and externally -- in a time of national depression reflected the very competitive market among downtown department stores during this period. In 1931-32, Hutzler's department store across the street underwent a major expansion. This campaign, called "Greater Hutzler's," encompassed the construction of a new and very up-to-date Art Moderne facility adjoining the original Palace building on the north, as well as the remodelling of the Palace ground floor facade to conform to the new addition.<sup>25</sup> James R. Edmunds, Jr., the architect for the Hutzler's modernization, also remodelled the first level of the Hochschild-Kohn store in a Deco style during this time.<sup>26</sup> The turn-of-the-century Renaissance Revival-style architecture of the Stewart & Company building would have been viewed as extremely dated and old-fashioned by the 1930s, especially in contrast to

<sup>24</sup>"A Message from the President of Stewart & Co. to His Associates."

<sup>25</sup>Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form for Hutzler Brothers Palace Building.

<sup>26</sup>S. Cucchiella, *Baltimore Deco*, p. 58.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  19 

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

the new Hutzler's building across the street. There is little doubt that the reconfiguration of the entrances, the renovation of the interior spaces, and the installation of air conditioning were intended to convey Stewart's ability to keep up with current fashions. Likewise, the renovation of the interior would have served the same purpose. Stewart's opened an art gallery on the sixth floor in 1954, as part of its efforts to maintain prominence in Baltimore's retail market, advertising quality pictures -- by English, Spanish, and Italian artists, all purchased in England -- at affordable prices (between \$30 and \$150).<sup>27</sup>

Despite the apparent vigor of Baltimore's downtown retailing, the forces that were to contribute its decline were all present by the 1930s. Automobiles lessened people's dependence on the urban infrastructure of streetcars and bus lines. Small, neighborhood shopping centers housed supermarkets that siphoned customers from Lexington Market, as well as shops that provided competition to smaller downtown stores. As Baltimore's suburbs grew, national chains and local stores alike began eyeing the suburban market and developing strategies to accommodate the automobile. By 1938, Sears constructed its department store on North Avenue, some distance from Baltimore's downtown retail core, but more easily accessible to shoppers in the northern suburbs and to major automobile routes. During the 1940s, merchants built garages in the downtown area to attract shoppers downtown and to counteract suburban competition like that posed by the Edmonson Village Shopping Center, also constructed in the 1940s. The Hecht Company, Stewart's, and Hutzler's remained at the forefront of new developments, acknowledging the increasingly important role of the automobile. Quick to develop satellite stores in the new suburban malls, the Hecht Company, for example, had also been one of the first to create parking lots for downtown shoppers.

By 1945, the Market Center area around Lexington Market ceased to be Baltimore's prime retail district.<sup>28</sup> Lexington Market's woes further exacerbated the decline of the downtown shopping area. Destroyed by fire in the 1950s, the Market recognized the importance of the automobile by constructing a large garage when it was rebuilt. Increasing automobile traffic made downtown less and less attractive. In the early 1970s, the two blocks of Lexington Street between Park Avenue and Lexington Market were closed to automobile traffic to create a pedestrian mall. Within the

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<sup>27</sup>Lydia Todd, "Art Gallery Opened by Department Store," Baltimore-American, October 3, 1954. Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

<sup>28</sup>Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form for Market Center (B-1262), p. 8-4 and 8-8. This Nomination has adopted the 1945 date derived from the survey of the Market Center District as the end date for Stewart's period of significance.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 20

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

decade both Hochschild Kohn and Stewart's closed.<sup>29</sup> By the end of the 1980s, Hutzler's and the Hecht Company had closed their downtown stores as well.

In its last years Stewart's underwent persistent changes in management, revealing the difficulties behind keeping the store viable. Stewart's built several suburban stores; the first on York Road, built in 1953-54, was touted as having the largest display of home furnishings on one floor in Baltimore.<sup>30</sup> Another store was opened on Reisterstown Road. At the same time management sought to maintain interest in the downtown store with special displays and advertising. In 1974, by Mayoral proclamation, a two week period March 1-16 was declared "Stewart's Salute to Maryland Weeks," and 17 window dressings highlighted historical events. The proclamation acknowledged Stewart's as having "occupied an important place in Baltimore retailing for three-quarters of a century."<sup>31</sup> Within five years, however, the store had been closed and the property sold to a private developer -- 18 months after competitor Hochschild-Kohn & Company closed their downtown store. The week-long 1979 closing sale brought record numbers of shoppers to the store.<sup>32</sup> The suburban Stewart's stores remained open. In 1982, these stores were replaced with Caldor's, a discount chain that had been acquired by Associated Dry Goods Corporation the year before.<sup>33</sup> At the downtown Stewart building, the ground floor was subdivided and leased to small shops. The interior of the building is now vacant; only the street front shops occupying the ground floor perimeter are still operational.

In addition to the important role it played in Baltimore's retail history, the Posner Building (Stewart's Department Store) is also significant as a good example of local architect Charles E. Cassell's (ca. 1838-1916) work.

The Posner Building, along with the Severn Apartments and the Stafford Hotel, was one of the most significant secular projects of Cassell's 1890-1900 period and a substantial contribution to the emerging streetscape of a cosmopolitan Baltimore. The newspaper article announcing its erection

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<sup>29</sup>"The Demise of Stewart's downtown. Why," *News-American*, January 3, 1979. Maryland Room Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

<sup>30</sup>"Stewart's Plans Store," *Sun*, December 20, 1953. Maryland Room Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

<sup>31</sup>Flyer from Maryland Room Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

<sup>32</sup>"Shoppers mob Stewart's downtown to take advantage of store's closing," *Sun*, January 9, 1979. Maryland Room Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Library.

<sup>33</sup>"Stewart's will convert to Caldor's," *Evening Sun*, November 4, 1982. Maryland Room Vertical Files, Enoch Pratt Library.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  21 

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

hailed it as "one of the largest and handsomest business structures in the city."<sup>34</sup>

One of 15 founding members of the Baltimore Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and a Fellow of the AIA by 1905, Charles E. Cassell was among Baltimore's most important and prolific architects at the turn of the century. Drawing on his training as an engineer, Cassell undertook large commissions like churches, apartment buildings, and hotels.

Eulogized in 1916 as "a leader in the architectural world here for more than 40 years,"<sup>35</sup> Cassell over the course of his career in the city was responsible for a large number of residences, ranging from individual house commissions, to apartment and hotel buildings, and to blocks of rowhouse development. He designed a number of churches, including the Swedenborgian Church, the Memorial Church of the Holy Comforter, Bishop Cummings Memorial Church, and the Greek Orthodox Church on Preston Street. Cassell also designed some office buildings, including the new Law Building, where he maintained his office until his death; this was also the site of the practice he maintained with his son John (Cassell & Son), from ca. 1904 until John's premature death in 1909. He associated as well with his nephew in Norfolk (Cassell & Cassell). Cassell designed a number of buildings outside of Baltimore, in other parts of Maryland, in Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Most notable of these buildings are the Chapel of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and the Immanuel Chapel of the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria.<sup>36</sup>

Charles E. Cassell was born in Portsmouth, Virginia, the son of Charles E. Cassell and Sarah W. Cassell. The family, whose name had originally been Casselli, had emigrated from Genoa, Italy, to Norfolk, Virginia, in the 1820s. Charles E. Cassell was educated in Virginia, studying engineering at the University of Virginia. He fought in the Confederate Army for all four years of the Civil War, eventually serving as a captain in the Engineers' Corps under General Pickett. He was charged with treason for removing his plans for the naval waterworks at Old Point Comfort, Virginia, to keep them from falling in the hands of the Union. At the end of the Civil War he fled to Chile to avoid execution. He spent two years in Chile, becoming an ensign in the Chilean Navy, before the U.S. pardoned him.<sup>37</sup> In the brief period before his arrival in Baltimore in 1868,

<sup>34</sup>"New Posner Building." Attachment to the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form for Stewart's Department Store.

<sup>35</sup>Obituary, *Sun*, August 30, 1916. Biographical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

<sup>36</sup>Biographical information, other than that provided in the obituary, comes from files of Historic Architects Roundtable, Baltimore Architecture Foundation; Wells, *The Virginia Architects*; and Dorsey, *A Guide to Baltimore Architecture*.

<sup>37</sup>Obituary, August 30, 1916. Biographical Files, Enoch Pratt Free Library.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 22

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

Cassell appears to have returned to Virginia, to marry Sally Bowles, the daughter of a prominent Episcopal clergyman.<sup>38</sup>

Cassell, who just two years after his arrival in Baltimore was one of the founders of that city's local American Institute of Architects chapter in 1870, was clearly an obvious candidate to design Samuel Posner's new department store. In addition to his engineering and structural expertise, he possessed strong connections to both the business and religious establishments of the city.<sup>39</sup> Cassell created a retail confection whose image so quintessentially embodies an era in Baltimore history that Barry Levinson filmed its imaginary destruction to convey the end of an age of innocence in his movie Avalon.

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<sup>38</sup>Cassell moved to Baltimore with his wife in 1868, where they took over the residence of Cassell's brother at 1407 Park Avenue, the home in which Cassell remained until his death in 1916. They had three daughters, Mary Virginia, Sally Primrose, and Matty, as well as a son, John, who became an architect and practiced with his father from about 1904 until his premature death from flu in ca. 1909. Mrs. Cassell also died suddenly in a flu epidemic, ca. 1895-1900, and several maiden aunts from Norfolk had taken turns caring for the children, commuting on the Bay Line steamer. Anecdotal history of Cassell's career and family is taken from Peter Kurtze interview with Richard B. Carter, grandson of Charles Cassell, September 17, 1991.

<sup>39</sup>Cassell enjoyed other patronage within the close-knit and competitive world of Baltimore retailing, designing a house for Albert Hutzler and the Bernheimer Annex on Fayette Street. Information from a handout from the Baltimore AIA Centennial Exhibition.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   8   Page  23 

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

=====

**MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA**

Geographic Organization:

Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Periods:

Industrial/Urban Dominance, A. D. 1870-1939

Prehistoric/Historic Period Themes:

Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning

Economic (Commercial and Industrial)

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Urban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s):

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

Known Design Source: Charles E. Cassell, architect

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   9   Page  24 

B-2290

Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   9   Page  25 

B-2290

Stewart's Department Store  
Baltimore city, MD

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B-2290

ST. JAKT'S  
DEPARTMENT  
STOKE

BALTIMORE CITY  
MARYLAND

18-360330-

4350510





S022 -1 100278 P057

B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWARTS DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

MD SHPO

HOWARD STREET (WEST) ELEVATION LOOKING SE



S022 -1 100210 P069

B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

MDSHPD

LEXINGTON STREET (SOUTH) ELEVATION, LOOKING NW



B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

MD SHPO

HOWARD STREET (WEST) ELEVATION LOOKING NE

S022 -1 T00253 P096





B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

MD SHPO

DETAIL, WEST ELEVATION

S022 -2 T00179 P073



B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

MD SHPO

CLAY STREET (NORTH) ELEVATION LOOKING E

S022 -1 100242 P049



B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

MD SHPO

CLAY STREET (NORTH ELEVATION), LOOKING SW

S022NOR T00196 P065



B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

MD SHPO

DETAIL, SOUTH ELEVATION

S022N0R T00302 P097





B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWARTS DEPARTMENT STORE)  
BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

LEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

MD SHPO

DETAIL, WEST ELEVATION

5022 -1 100284 P077



B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

INTERIOR, STAIRWELL AT NW CORNER OF BUILDING

MD SHPO

S022NOR T00177 P008





B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

INTERIOR, STAIRWELL AT SE CORNER OF BUILDING

MD SHPO

S022NOR T00299 P029



B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

MD SHPO

INTERIOR, FOURTH FLOOR, LOOKING NW

S022 -1 T00100 P024



B-2290

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

NOVEMBER 1998

INTERIOR, FOURTH FLOOR, LOOKING N

MDSHPD

S022 -1 T00160 P017





B-2200

POSNER BUILDING (STEWART'S DEPARTMENT STORE)

BALTIMORE CITY, MARYLAND

HEATHER EWING

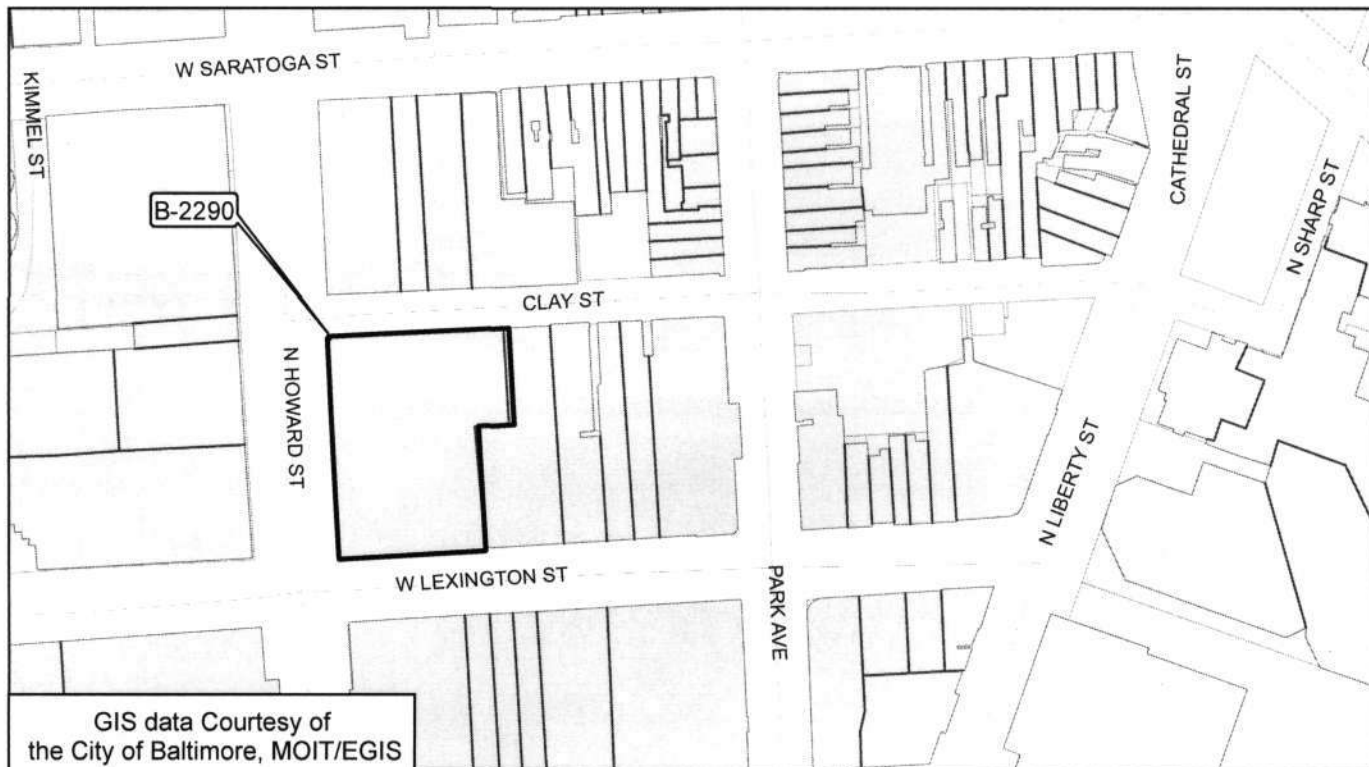
NOVEMBER 1998

INTERIOR, CLAY STREET WING, LOOKING W

MD SHPO

S072N0R 100187 P040

B-2290  
Stewart's Department Store (Posner Building, Stewart and Co.)  
201 N. Howard Street & 226-232 W. Lexington Street  
Block 0598, Lot 007  
Baltimore City  
Baltimore East Quad.



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Stewart and Company Department Store

AND/OR COMMON

Stewart's

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

201 North Howard Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

VICINITY OF

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES, RESTRICTED☒ YES, UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☒ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Associated Dry Goods, Inc.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

417 Fifth Avenue

CITY, TOWN

New York

VICINITY OF

STATE

New York 10011

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Baltimore City Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Records Office Room 601

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

City of Baltimore Neighborhood Survey: C.B.D. West

DATE

1976

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS Commission for Historic and Architectural Preservation

CITY, TOWN

City Hall, Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

## DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPLODED		

---

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Stewart's Department Store, 201 North Howard Street, is a six story with basement retail sales floor, Beaux Arts commercial structure occupying almost one-quarter of a block in Baltimore's prime retail area. Highly ornate, the masonry fireproof structure is faced with white glazed brick with carved and molded limestone trim and cast stone decorative appliques. The North Howard Street facade is 15 bays long, the West Lexington Street facade 11, with architectural treatment and detailing repeated in both. The ground floor facade has been modified, with entrances on North Howard Street shifted. This facade is now faced with green marble, and has full bay width store windows framed with bronze trim. A heavy aluminum canopy like band runs the full length of both facades, at one time used to anchor a striped canvas awning. This facade and canopy has been extended across 217 North Howard Street, a commercial structure that pre-dates this structure.. The space between the show windows and a string course is filled with tripartite transom windows set between truncated columns, square at the 1,2,5,8,11, and 13th bays, round in the others. The round columns have carved Ionic capitals, the square decorated at the top with bands carved with anthemion. The heavy second floor level string course is composed of two stepped flat friezes below a floriated cyma-reversa and fillet band, then seven courses laid in common bond, a bead and reel mold, tongue and dart band and a projecting fascia with bead and reel, tongue and dart, a heavy egg and dart bed mold, and finally a cyma-recta crown mold.

The bays are defined by large slightly brick engaged pilaster strips with molded bases resting on the second floor string course. The pilasters are tied with a molded string course at the third floor level, with cast lions heads and wreaths applied to the pilasters, which terminate at an attic level cornice in excellent large scale Corinthian capitals. The attic cornice has two stepped flat friezes separated by a heavy torus and capped with a bead and reel band, fillet egg and dart bed mold and flat corona. The attic story is topped with a massive overhanging Classical Revival cornice composed of a cyma-reversa bed mold below heavy dentils and an egg and dart crown mold, with a continuous row of carved scroll consoles that support the cornice band, a flat frieze, cyma-reversa and cyma-recta, and a flat corona. The corona is studded with cast lion head bosses.

The first, second, twelfth and thirteenth bays along North Howard Street are paired, and the sixth through eighth bays on North Howard and the fourth, fifth and sixth bays on West Lexington are grouped together, with the remaining bays single width. The paired bays are divided by single columns with Composite capitals and simple molded bases at the second through fourth floors and cast stone Caryatides at the fifth. These statues support a pair of round compound arches with carved impostes, Composite caps and molded keystones. The jambs of the window units take the form of low relief engaged pilasters. The paired bays have blind arches at the second level, above 1/1 double hung sash, and the third and fourth floors have trabeated windows with the same 1/1 double hung sash. The spandrels are highly



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

7

PAGE

One

ornamented with cast stone panels. The sixth floor attic story has paired horizontal casements within cast stone decorative panels. The paired bays have segmental pediments above the roof cornice, with a large scrolled anthemion key and pinnacle and anthemion leaves at the edges of the pediment. The archivolt is molded and the tympanum heavily carved.

The sixth through eighth bays on North Howard and the fourth through sixth bays on West Lexington are joined above the roof cornice by a richly decorated triangular pediment. These bays were the original location of the main entrances to the store. West Lexington retains part of this detail. The three part grouping is divided by two fluted two story Corinthian columns, with the third floor string course appliques applied as necking at the third and fifth floor lines. The jambs are cased with low relief fluted engaged pilaster strips with flat Corinthian caps. The spandrel between the two two story sections at the fourth level are panelled but otherwise unenriched, but the wall surface under the triangular pediments, below the roof cornice is heavily carved and includes the store name "Stewart & Co." in raised block letters within a crossetted frame. The three part entrance pavilions project slightly from the wall surface. The tympanum of the Classical pediment is highly decorated with cast stone carvings, and the anthemion details used at the segmental pediments are repeated in these pavilions.

The remaining bays have single rectangular 1/1 double hung sash in the second through fourth floors, and re terminated with round compound arches at the fifth, with molded impost blocks and cast keys.

The Stewart's Department Store was opened for business in 1904. The architect is unknown.

The last two bays in the North Howard Street facade and the first two bays in the West Lexington Street facade, second floor level, have been in-filled with brick flush with the pilaster strips to accomodate new signs in script.



# SIGNIFICANCE

6-2290

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1904

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Stewart and Company Department Store is an exceptional example of Beaux Arts Classicism popular for large scale commercial and public buildings between 1890 and 1920 in this country. The scale and mass of this six story, 150 x 130 structure is unsurpassed for commercial buildings in the Beaux Arts style in Maryland, and the excellence of the composition and exuberant detailing is of great importance to the visual and architectural character of the CBD and the city.

This 1904 building replaces a row of four story brick structures strung out along North Howard and West Lexington Streets at the turn of the century. Stewarts was begun in the corner building in 1901, and with Hutzler's, Hochschild-Kohn and the soon to be completed Hecht's Company, all directly across North Howard Street, this location became the "100%" retail corner of the Baltimore CBD. Stewarts, one of the largest and oldest retail operations serving the metropolitan Baltimore region, has been in continuous operation at this site since its founding in 1901.

1. The Power Periodical, published by the Consolidated Gas Electric Light and Power Company, Baltimore, November 1926
2. The CBD West: An Historical and Architectural Perspective, Commission for Historic and Architectural Preservation, Baltimore, 1976

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.45

QUADRANGLE NAME \_\_\_\_\_

QUADRANGLE SCALE \_\_\_\_\_

## UTM REFERENCES

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			
F			
H			

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
-------	------	--------	------

**FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Russell Wright, A.I.A., A.I.P.

## ORGANIZATION

Department of Housing and Community Development

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

STREET &amp; NUMBER

222 East Saratoga Street

TELEPHONE

.396-4265

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

OR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

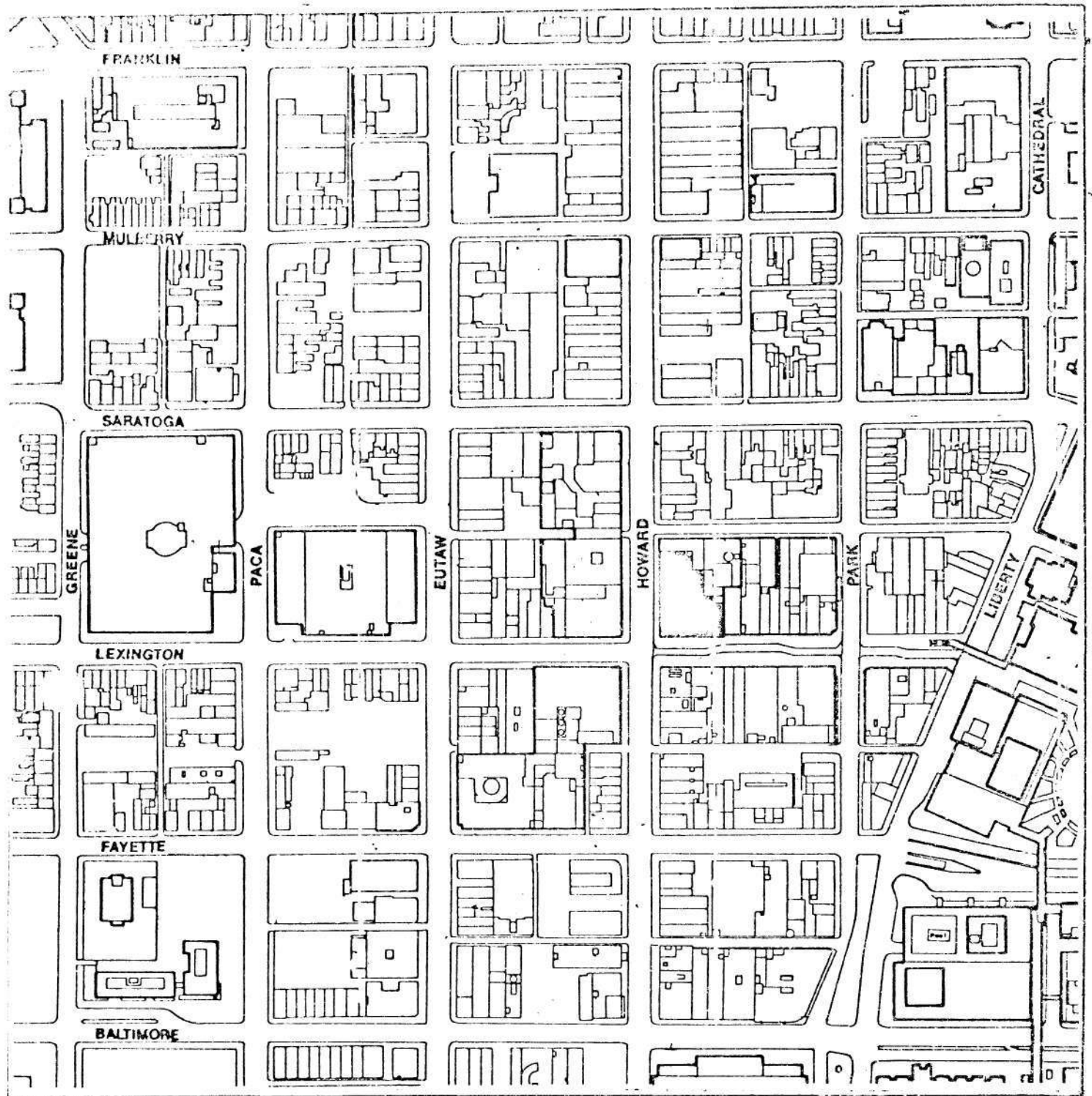
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**CHIEF OF REGISTRATION**







**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT:  
BALTIMORE'S JOINT DEVELOPMENT/  
VALUE CAPTURE PROGRAM:  
BALTIMORE GARDENS**

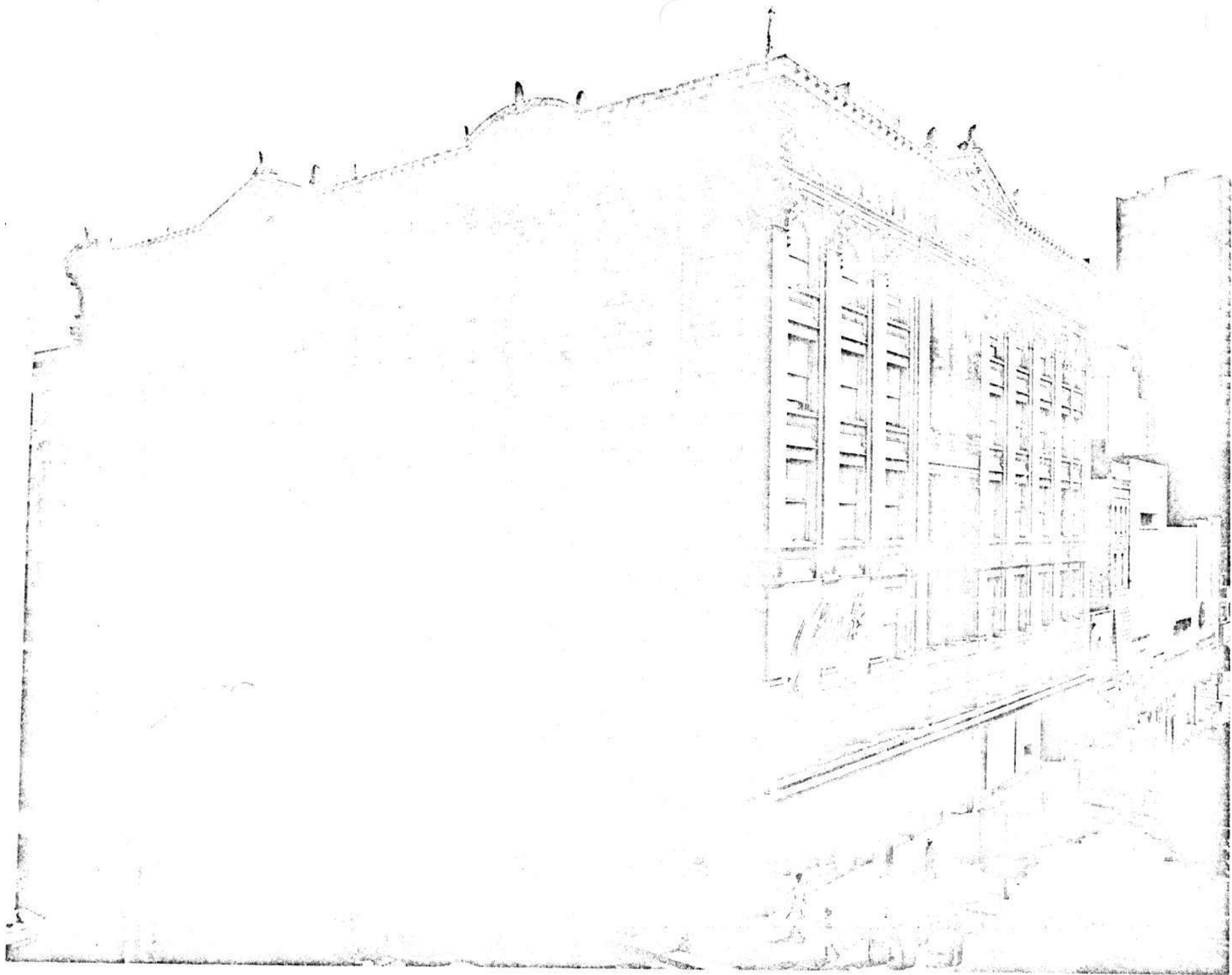
**FIGURE**

8-2290  
STEWARTS  
201 North Howard



NOV. 1977

SOURCE: DEPT. OF PLANNING



Posner Building; Stewart and Company	1899-1900
Stewart's Department Store (preferred)	
201 N. Howard Street; 226-232 W. Lexington Street	
(private)	

The Posner Department Store (Stewart & Co.,) building is an excellent example of the Renaissance Revival style and is also significant in the development of department store architecture in Baltimore. Prior to the erection of the Posner's store, Hutzler Brothers Palace Building (1888) and Hochschild Kohn (1897; demolished) were the largest and most architecturally distinguished department store buildings in the Howard Street area. Posner's incorporated the masonry-clad steel frame developed by the Chicago School with the ornate, highly decorated Renaissance Revival style which was still popular in Baltimore at the turn of the century. In 1904, Posner's was purchased by Louis Stewart, whose later department store holdings included Lord and Taylor in New York, and the store was renamed Stewart and Company, which occupied the building until 1979.



# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Posner Building; Stewart and Company

and/or common Stewart's Department Store (preferred)

### 2. Location

street & number 201 North Howard Street; 226-232 West Lexington Street    not for publication

city, town Baltimore    vicinity of    congressional district 3rd

state Maryland    county   

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u>  </u> district	<u>  </u> public	<u>  </u> occupied (partially)	<u>  </u> agriculture
<u>  </u> building(s)	<u>  </u> private	<u>  </u> unoccupied	<u>  </u> commercial
<u>  </u> structure	<u>  </u> both	<u>  </u> work in progress	<u>  </u> educational
<u>  </u> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<u>  </u> entertainment
<u>  </u> object	<u>  </u> in process	<u>  </u> yes: restricted	<u>  </u> government
	<u>  </u> being considered	<u>  </u> yes: unrestricted	<u>  </u> industrial
	<u>  </u> not applicable	<u>  </u> no	<u>  </u> military
			<u>  </u> other:

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name 3900 Corporation

street & number 3900 North Charles Street    telephone no.: 235-3900

city, town Baltimore    state and zip code Maryland 21218

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Courthouse    liber WA 3732

street & number Fayette and Calvert Street    folio 280

city, town Baltimore    state Maryland

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Baltimore Retail District Survey/MCDC et al

date 1980    federal    state    county    local    x

depository for survey records Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation

city, town Baltimore    state Maryland 21201

## 7. Description

Survey No. B-2290

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

### SUMMARY:

The Posner Building is a six-story brick department store building built in 1899 in a highly ornate Renaissance Revival style and located on the northeast corner of North Howard and West Lexington Streets in central Baltimore, Maryland. The principal facade faces west toward Howard Street and originally contained three entrances, with a fourth entrance on the secondary elevation on Lexington Street. The present street level of the building is occupied on both elevations by small individual retail stores. The center entrance to the main store building on Howard Street was closed in the mid-20th century and the two flanking entrances surrounded with green marble facing. The upper floors of the building are presently unoccupied.

### General Description:

The main facade of the Posner Building has a central grouping or pavilion of three bays under a triangular pediment at the roof line which marked the main Howard Street entrance of the original store. Two flanking pavilions of two bays each are separated from the central bay by three bays. These smaller groupings have semi-circular pediments at the roofline. Within these bays, the windows are flanked by terra cotta Corinthian columns and the spandrel between the floor levels are ornamented by terra cotta panels with figures of children, floral garlands, and lion heads. Caryatid figures adorn the fifth story of the pavilions. The sixth story forms a frieze with rectangular windows surrounded by terra cotta decoration. The bays of the facade are separated by brick piers with Corinthian capitals. The fifth story windows arch just below the secondary cornice which separates the fifth and sixth stories. A larger and more elaborate cornice tops the sixth story. The roofline is flat except for the pediments.

The Lexington Street facade originally had a central pavilion with a triangular pediment flanked by three bays on each side. The fourth entrance to the store was in the center of the facade under the pavilion. At an unknown date in the early to mid-20th century, two additional bays were added to the southeast corner of the Lexington facade. In all details, the Lexington facade duplicates the main elevation.

The Howard Street elevation is asymmetrical, with the northernmost pavilion forming the end of the facade. At the southeast corner of the facade, two additional bays flank the pavilion, meeting the bays of the Lexington Street elevation. Adjoining the original building on the north end of the Howard Street side is a four-story brick commercial building of the late 19th century which is now part of the consolidated lot, but apparently was separately owned when the building was designed. The architect may have been instructed to formulate his design with the assumption that this

(continue, please)

## 8. Significance

Survey No. B-2290

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1899-1900 Builder/Architect Charles E. Cassell

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

### SUMMARY:

The Posner Department Store (Stewart & Co.) building is an excellent example of the Renaissance Revival style and is also significant in the development of department store architecture in Baltimore. Prior to the erection of the Posner's store, Hutzler Brothers Palace Building (1888) and Hochschild Kohn (1897; demolished) were the largest and most architecturally distinguished department store buildings in the Howard Street area. Posner's incorporated the masonry-clad steel frame developed by the Chicago School with the ornate, highly decorated Renaissance Revival style which was still popular in Baltimore at the turn of the century. In 1904, Posner's was purchased by Louis Stewart, whose later department store holdings included Lord and Taylor in New York, and the store was renamed Stewart and Company, which occupied the building until 1979.

### History and Support:

Posner's was established by Elias and Samuel Posner, who came to Baltimore in 1876 from New York via New Brunswick, New Jersey, where the brothers started a small dry goods store. Baltimore was then a growing port city with thousands of immigrants arriving each year, offering business opportunities in all fields, particularly in retailing. The Posners opened their first store at 172 West Lexington Street (pre-1887 street number), later adding 174 to the store address. The Posners were early exploiters of newspaper advertising, a technique later used by most of the other retail stores, particularly Bernheimer Brothers. The Posners put their first ad in the Baltimore Sun in 1878, emphasizing the number of each listed item in stock and using italics freely to attract attention. They called the store "Posner's One Price Grand Central Establishment", the term department store being almost unheard of in Baltimore until the 1890's. In 1879, Posner's moved to 134-138 West Lexington Street.

(continue, please).

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-2290

Baltimore Sun Mar. 28, 1899.

Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland Dept.; Bio File (Elias and Samuel Posner; Louis Stewart); Vertical File: Stewart & Co.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name Baltimore East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

co-terminous with irregular lot measuring approx. 200 ft. by 165 ft.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet L. David, Historical Preservation Analyst

organization Comm. for Hist. & Arch. Pres. (CHAP)

date February, 1986

street & number 606 Tower Suites, 118 N. Howard St.

telephone (301) 396-4866

city or town Baltimore

state Maryland 21201

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

building would eventually be acquired and the final two bays could be added at a later time to balance the Howard Street elevation. This was never carried out, and the facade of the earlier structure was painted to match the new building, but it remains as built above the street level.

During the mid-20th century, the street level of the Posner Building was redesigned. The central entrance on Howard Street was closed off and the flanking entrances were surrounded by green marble facing, as were the bases of the display windows. At the transom level of the first floor, a framework for a continuous retractable awning was installed. Since the division of the first floor into smaller stores in the early 1980's, several individual entrances have been added. The northern Howard Street entrance has an awning lettered "Stewart's Mall". The upper stories have been unoccupied since 1982.

At the northeast corner of the Posner Building lot is a nine-story wing, built as six stories when the main section was erected. It was intended to contain the shipping and receiving departments, the employees' lunchroom, the cafe, two sales departments, and an employees' locker room. The wing has large doors on the Clay Street level for loading and unloading. A metal awning overhangs the street level. Three additional stories were added during the 20th century, but the original cornice line of the wing is still visible.

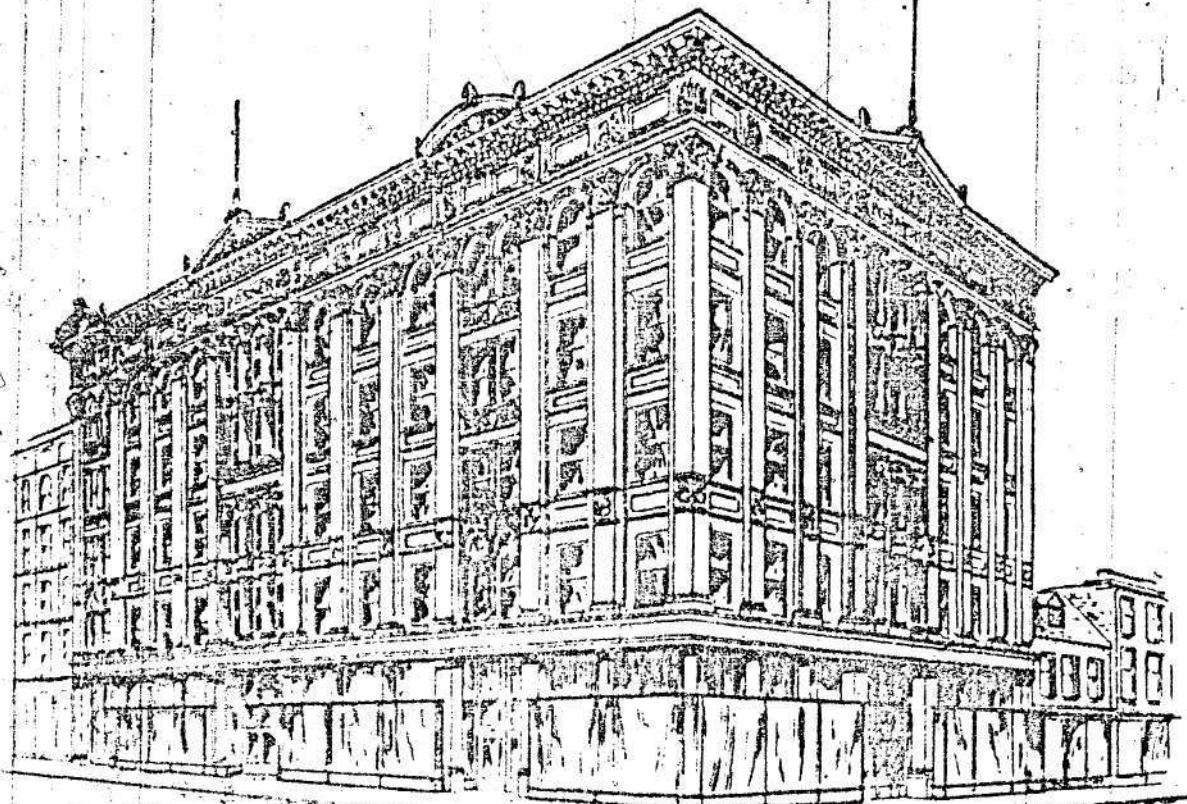


Elias Posner died in 1885, but Samuel carried on the business through the erection of the new Posner's Building in 1899-1900. Charles E. Cassell was chosen as the architect, being one of the leading designers in Baltimore during the late 19th century. The plans for the building were announced with a substantial article in the Sun on March 28, 1899. It was described as a "veritable palace of trade" and much space was devoted to a history of the development of the firm. The Posners' first advertisement was reprinted with the article. A complete description of the building emphasized the spacious floor plans, fireproof construction, and the inclusion of conveniences for the customer such as elevators, retiring rooms, a cafe, and a pneumatic cash system. The building had its own electric generator system housed in a separate building on the north side of Clay Street. Memories of the Clay Street Fire of 1873 led the architect to include wire glass in all windows facing that street and in the light wells in the main building. Another fireproofing feature brought out in the article was the lack of wood in the structure. Only the floors and the door and window frames on the main elevations were of wood.

The sheer size of the Posner Building made a major impact on the Howard Street retail center. With the Hochschild Kohn store and Hutzler Brothers on the west side of Howard, Posner's in the same block on the east side, and Lexington Market and many small retail establishments a block to the west, the Howard and Lexington intersection took on the appearance of a modern urban shopping district.

In 1904, Samuel Posner sold the business and the building to Louis Stewart, a former railroad magnate in New York who branched out into department store retailing. In 1900, Stewart became president of James McCreery and Company, apparently a department store chain. In the early 1920's, Stewart formed the Associated Dry Goods Corporation to control his holdings. In Baltimore, Posner's was renamed Stewart and Company after Stewart's purchase and under that name continued as one of the largest department stores in the city. In 1931, the basement level was opened as a sales floor and was air conditioned by the first such unit in a large department store in the city. Later in the 1930's, the air conditioning was extended to include the first through the third floors and the beauty salon.

By the late 1950's, Stewart's was experiencing the general decline in sales volume felt by all the downtown stores caused by the erection of neighborhood shopping centers which siphoned off their traditional customers. Stewart's built several branches in these centers, but also tried to maintain the Howard Street store with special displays and advertising. Several changes in management indicated the difficulty the store was having in keeping the store viable. Finally, the Howard Street store was closed in 1979 and sold to a private developer. The Stewart's branches remained open until 1982, when they were replaced with Caldor's, a discount chain also owned by Associated Dry Goods Corp. Plans to open a shopping mall called Stewart's Mall in the Howard Street building were announced, but these have as yet not been accomplished, beyond the division of the street level into small shops.



THE NEW POSNER BUILDING.

**NEW POSNER BUILDING**

**An Imposing Monument To The  
Enterprise Of A Live  
Baltimore Firm.**

**VERITABLE PALACE OF TRADE**

**Remarkable Growth From A  
Small Beginning.**

**The Firm Started, in Business With  
A Capital Of \$3,500, And Is Now  
About To Erect A \$250,000 Edifice  
On A \$300,000 Lot—Consistent  
Advertisers In The Sun.**

In the month of October, 1876, two young men, Elias and Samuel Posner, came from New York to life in Baltimore, and, if possible, to get a foothold in business.

It was their belief that Baltimore, trading, as it did, with the South, offered greater inducements to their line of trade than was offered by the more congested centres of the North and East.

Here, they came and here they established their first venture in Baltimore.

Their capital was \$3,500. Money, however, was not the chief capital upon which they reckoned upon success; it was integrity in business and the desire to gain the confidence and respect of the community of which they were members.

Their first launch in business was at 172 West Lexington street. The number of persons who were employed by the Messrs. Posner was just seven. Today, exclusive of buyers, agents, etc., and agents throughout the country, there are now employed in the home building alone about 150 per-

sons, of 543 more than the little corps of attendants who first greeted Posner Brothers' customers twenty-two years ago.

It may be interesting to the public of Baltimore to know that at the very first the Messrs. Posner used in advertising exclusively the columns of THE SUN and that this exclusive use was continued for many years.

This advertising was the foundation upon which the present business was built. It was the means by which Posner Brothers were introduced not only to the reading public, but to the purchasing public who have money to spend and who spend it.

That the advertisements—small as they were—were good investments cannot be well denied.

**Their First Advertisement.**

Their first advertisement which appeared in THE SUN on April 8, 1876, was as follows:

**100 DOZEN LADIES' FULL REGULAR MADE SHIRT CLOCKED BALBRIGGAN HOSE at 25 cents per pair**

Ladies' SIX CLOCKED BALBRIGGAN HOSE at 15c a pair

Ladies' Full Regular HOSE, Extra Long, at 15c a pair

Over 10 different styles to MISSES' HOSE at from 4 cents up

Ladies' CORSETS at from 2 cents up

100 down LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS at from 2 cents up

100 down COLORED BORDERED HEMMED HANDKERCHIEFS at 25 cents each

500 yards of HAMBURG EMBROIDERIES at from 2 cents up

Ladies' Two Button KID GLOVES, New shades, at 15c a pair

Ladies' Two Button LIME THREAD GLOVES at 15c a pair

A large assortment of WOOL FRINGE at from 5 cents up

100 yards of STRAW HATS for Ladies and Misses, in every shade, at lowest prices

100 yards of FRENCH FLOWERS at lowest prices

100 yards of FRENCH FLOWERS at lowest prices

100 yards of FRENCH FLOWERS at lowest prices

100 yards of FRENCH FLOWERS at lowest prices

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This was the "item of business news" which set in motion the wheels of success and future greatness.

The advertisement was written by the Messrs. Posner personally, and the same was then shown as is today in their advertising.

**A Remarkable Development.**

In February, 1883, Mr. Elias Posner died, leaving the entire responsibility of conducting the establishment on the shoulders of Mr. Samuel Posner. That Mr. Posner was equal to the occasion of carrying on the business by himself is shown by the establishment as it stands today—a monument of which any man may justly feel proud.

It was not many months after this that an increase of space became necessary for the proper conducting of the establishment.

In 1887 property adjoining was acquired on Lexington street. However large this was, it was not equal to the demands for "more room."

In 1889 property No. 212 West Fayette street was leased to accommodate the delivery system, which had grown from insignificant to large proportions.

Even this did not meet the requirements of the trade. Mr. Posner then began the purchase of the site at the northeast corner of Lexington and Howard streets, work on which will begin soon, and completion is expected in the coming fall.

The ground fronting on Lexington, Howard and Clay streets cost about \$200,000 and the building, an excellent picture of which is given on this page, will, it is estimated, cost \$250,000.

**Description Of The New Building.**

The building will be one of the largest and handsomest business structures in the city. It will extend 110 feet 4 inches on Lexington street and 175 feet 7 1/2 inches on Howard street. A wing in the rear of and connecting with the main structure will extend to Clay street, making the depth of that portion of the building 202 feet, from Lexington to Clay streets. There will be a frontage of 24 feet on Clay street.



A basement and six stories will be devoted to the various departments of Mr. Posner's business. The height of each of these, in the clear, will be: Basement, 12 feet; first story, 21 feet; second story, 13 feet; third story, 15 feet; fourth story, 14 feet; fifth story, 13 feet; sixth story, an average of 12 feet. This will make the height of the building 66 feet from the curbstone to the top of the cornice, and 108 feet from the basement floor to the level of the sixth floor.

Italian Renaissance will be the style of architecture, and creamy white brick and terra cotta, with artistic ornamentation, will compose the exterior walls. These, with many large plate-glass windows, will give the building a light, airy and graceful appearance. No stone will be used except in the base of the show-windows.

#### Three Magnificent Entrances.

There will be one entrance on Lexington street and three entrances on Howard street. The Lexington street entrance and the middle one on Howard street will consist of three pairs of doors grouped together. Two pairs of doors will be at each of the other two entrances on Howard street. The entrances will be accentuated by pavilions of modeled terra cotta, relieved by columns, floral ornaments, figures of children and Caryatides. Mr. Posner's monogram will be combined with the ornamentation, and the name of the firm, "Posner's," with the terra cotta ornament, over the Lexington street entrance and the middle entrance on Howard street.

The first story will be treated in the Ionic style and the remaining height of the building in the Corinthian style. The windows of the sixth story, with ornamental architraves, are embodied in the frieze. No metal at all will be used in the front, the whole structural features of the exterior being of brick and terra cotta. An artist modeler will do the modelling for the terra cotta ornamentation.

#### Splendid Light And Ventilation.

Show windows will occupy all of the first floor not taken up by the entrances. Immediately above these will be movable stone, for ventilation. Above the first plate-glass windows opening into the story will be seventy-five plate-glass windows on Howard street and forty-five plate-glass windows on Lexington street, which will admit a flood of light. The glass in these windows will average 7 feet in width by 10 feet in height. There will be, besides, a light and ventilation well near the centre of the building.

There will be one large showroom in the basement for china, glassware and other housekeeping articles. Connecting with it will be a packing and receiving room, opening on Clay street.

Each of the six floors in the main building will be one large, open showroom, ex-

tending the full dimensions of the building on Lexington and Howard streets.

#### The Clay Street Wing.

The Clay street wing will be 28 by 65 feet. In the first story, over the packing and receiving room, will be the package delivery department. A mezzanine floor in this story will contain the cafe and serving room. Projecting into the main room on the level of the mezzanine floor will be an ornamental gallery. This gallery will overlook the whole first floor of the main building. It will be fitted up as a reception room for ladies, where they may rest, wait for their friends, write letters and chat.

On the second story of the wing will be ladies' retiring rooms, connecting with toilet rooms. Another packing room will be in the rear of these. There will also be a mezzanine floor on this story for millinery workrooms.

The third story will be occupied by the window shade department. Another packing room will be on the fourth story, and a fourth-story mezzanine will be used as a locker room for the male employees of the store.

A kitchen and the employees' dining room will be on the fifth story, and a packing room and storeroom on the sixth story of the wing. With the mezzanines the wing will have nine floors and a basement.

Mr. Posner's private office and the other offices will be on the Lexington street side of the fifth story. Toilet rooms for the employees will be in the basement, on the first, third, fourth and fifth floors, and on the second story and fourth-story mezzanines.

#### Protected From Fire.

There will be four hydraulic passenger elevators in the building, two at the Lexington street entrance and two at the middle entrance, on Howard street. At the Clay street entrance will be a freight elevator. Besides the elevator, there will be a staircase near the Lexington street entrance, one near the centre of the building and one, for employees, near the Clay street entrance. All the staircases will be fireproof. The two in the main

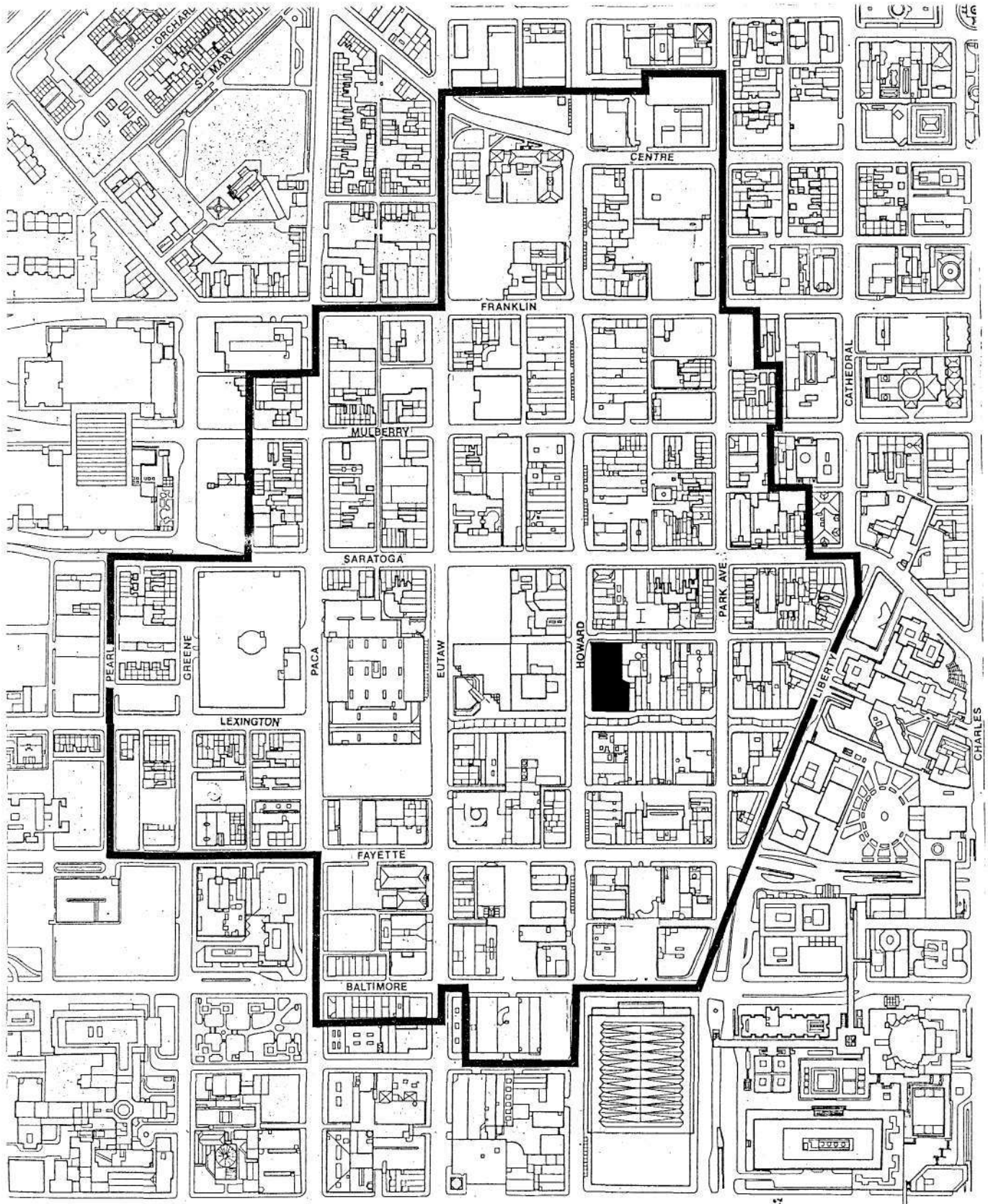
building will be for customers and will be seven feet wide. Another staircase of equal dimensions will lead to the basement.

The building will have a steel frame, and Mr. Charles E. Cassell, the architect, says it will be the most thoroughly fireproof structure in the city. The Clay street front, where there will be most danger of fire from the outside, and the light and ventilation well will have steel sash and frames and wire glass. No wood will be used in the entire structure except for the windows and doors on Lexington and Howard streets and the flooring. The floors will be solid. They will be laid over sleepers imbedded in cement.

#### Detached Power House.

Electric motors will run the elevator pumps and the pneumatic cash system. Electricity will light the building and steam will heat it. Power for all these will be obtained from the power house to be located on Clay street, opposite the wing. The power house, which will have a front of twenty-nine feet on Clay street, was described in THE SUN of March 14. A tunnel under Clay street will connect it with the store. The location of the power house away from the main building will obviate the necessity of having any fire whatsoever in the main building.

Mr. Cassell has prepared all the plans for the building and they will be in the hands of the builders tomorrow for estimates. The work of demolishing the old buildings on the site has been in progress some time, and it is expected that Mr. Posner will begin building by April 15. The building may be completed by October 1.



Baltimore Metrocenter Survey  
 Market Center  
 Stewart's Department Store  
 201 North Howard Street  
 B-2290

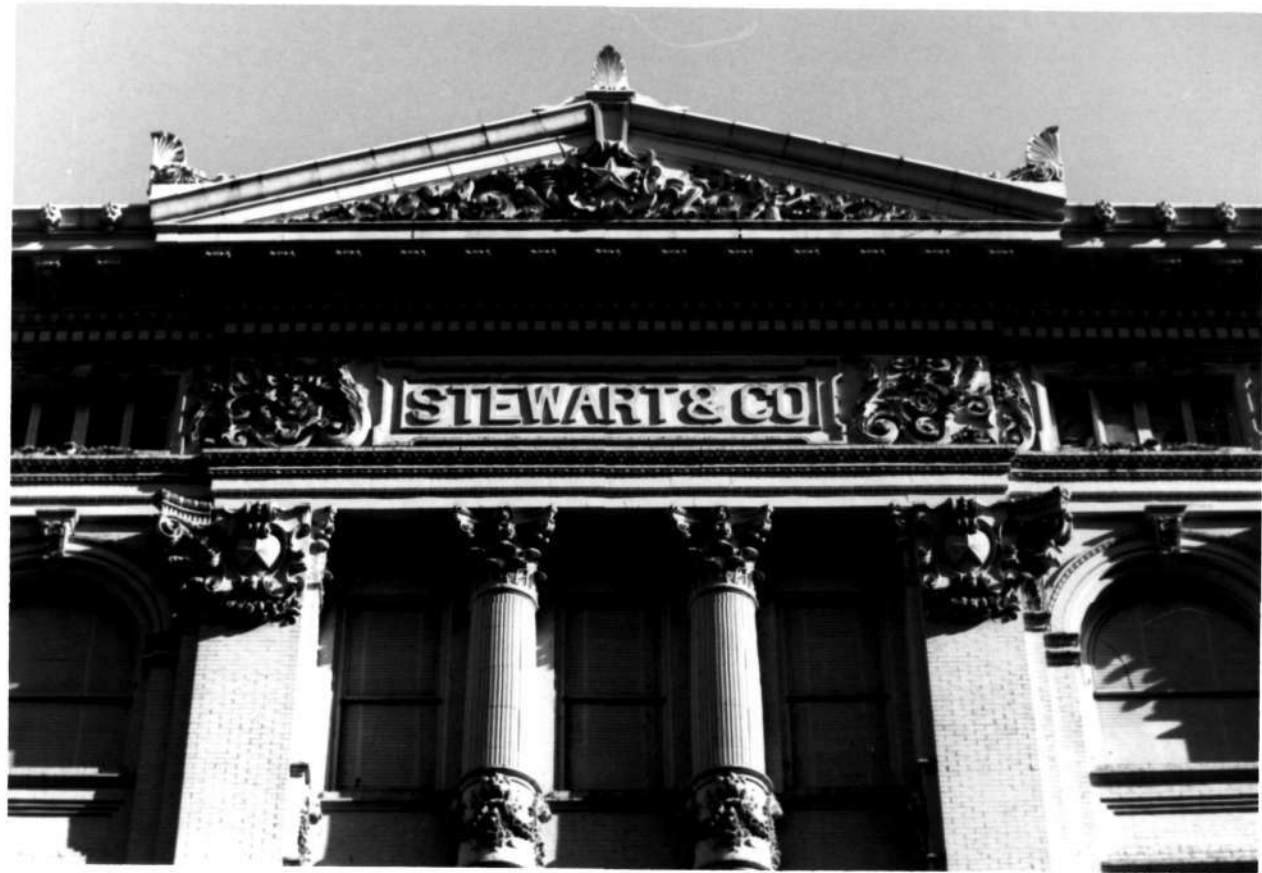




Stewart's Department Store      B-2290  
201 North Howard Street  
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey  
Baltimore (City), Maryland  
Photo: Janet Davis  
November 1985  
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust  
Southwest corner view  
1/4



Stewart's Department Store                      B-2290  
201 North Howard Street  
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey  
Baltimore (City), Maryland  
Photo: Janet Davis  
November 1985  
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust  
West elevation  
2/4





Stewart's Department Store      B-2290

201 North Howard Street

Market Center - Metrocenter Survey

Baltimore (City), Maryland

Photo: Janet Davis

November 1985

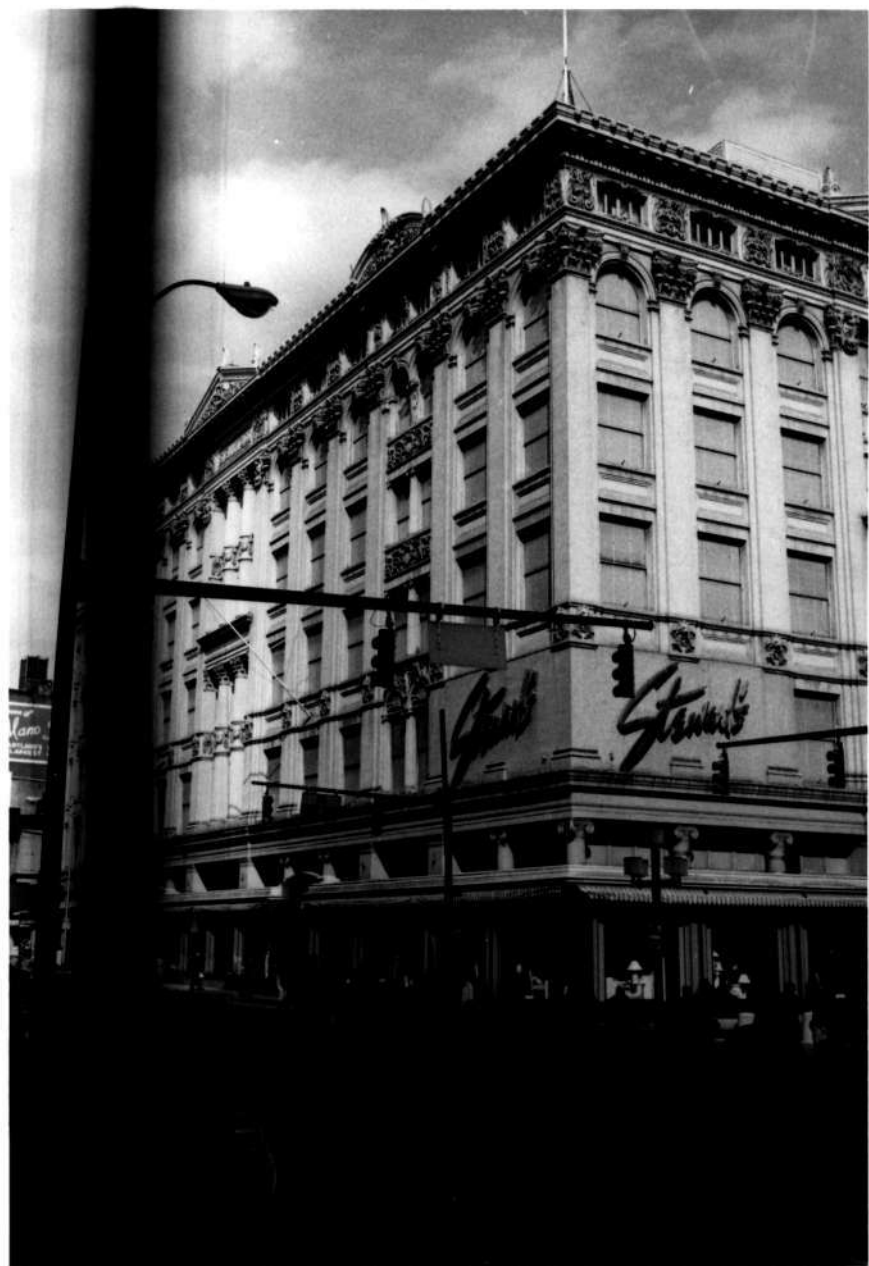
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust

Detail, west elevation pediment

3/4



Stewart's Department Store      B-2290  
201 North Howard Street  
Market Center - Metrocenter Survey  
Baltimore (City), Maryland  
Photo: Janet Davis  
November 1985  
Neg. loc.: Maryland Historical Trust  
Detail, terra cotta  
4/4



B-2290

BLOCK 598  
201 N. HOWARD  
STEWART'S

neg. no. 26

2/76

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

B 2290 77  
598  
MAG#0422905711

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Stewart's

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

201 N. Howard Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

☐ DISTRICT  
☒ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

☐ PUBLIC  
☒ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH  
**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**  
☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

☒ OCCUPIED  
☐ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
☐ YES: RESTRICTED  
☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

**PRESENT USE**

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM  
☒ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK  
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Telephone #:

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Records Office Room 601

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

Baltimore City Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

City of Baltimore Neighborhood Survey

DATE

1976

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &  
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORD

Room 900

CITY, TOWN

26 South Calvert St.  
Baltimore, Md. 21202

STATE



**7 DESCRIPTION**

B-2290

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

---

This five and one-half story high, eleven bay wide building is constructed of white brick in running bond, and stone.

First story is composed of large sheet glass stone windows and entrances; these have moulded stone mullions. Above these windows is a stepped cornice. Rising above the cornice are tripartite transoms set between truncated pilasters, most of which are round and fluted with Ionic capitals (four others are flat, unfluted, and are topped with moulded blocks). These pilasters support a thick, moulded cornice.

Windows of the upper stories are all double hung, with one-over-one lights. All have flat arch lintels except those of the fifth story, which have moulded and stilted round arch lintels with keystones. Flat brick piers divide the windows into bays. These piers terminate, at the top of the fifth story windows, in Corinthian capitals. Two superimposed rows of fluted, Corinthian-capped columns, three to a row, appear at the center of the building. These act as mullions. The third bays from the right contain two small windows instead of one large one. These windows have round, fluted pilasters for mullions, and acanthus-decorated panels appear above second, third, and fourth story windows.

A small cornice appears above the piers. Above this are paired double casement windows, between which appear ornately carved panels. A dentil row appears next; then comes the roof cornice, braced and studded with small lion heads, and interrupted by three "pediments" - one classical flanked by two three-centered arch pediments (actually small parapets).

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

B-2290

**PERIOD****AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW**

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1904

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

This is a large twentieth century department store, the only one in Maryland built in a Beaux-Arts inspired style on this scale.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Planning Assistants

ORGANIZATION

COMMISSION FOR HISTORICAL &  
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

DATE

1976

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Room 900

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

26 South Calvert St.  
Baltimore, Md. 21202

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438